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Hello Sally & Helen,

Greetings. The following paragraph below is a brief commentary on my film, FRIENDLY WITNESS, to hopefully give one a better idea of the why, what and how....

The 31 mins. FRIENDLY WITNESS is comprised of material shot by myself over the last 23 years. There is no found footage in the film (the old Black & White movies footage was shot by myself off of movie theater screens - the only exception). The locales include Europe, North America, North Africa, the South Pacific, Australia and Asia (including those hot spots Iran and Afghanistan). The work is in 5 sections or 2 parts as the first four sections constitute the first part and the last part (twice as long as the first part) is the remaining section. The first part then is lighter, gamier, with built in diversion like pre-feature genre relations to cartoons, trailers, newsreels. This sets off the high seriousness of the grand Weltanschauung finale and the pairing is necessary to undercut the masterpiece syndrome of the conclusion. On the tracks the first part is devoted to preintellectual late 50s/early 60s rock while the world view is buoyed by a classical piece. There is a darkening then in the tone, mood and subject matter between the frothy first part and the more turbulent second part. Spectacle, public domain, objective (god's eye) point of view is the aesthetic approach with the constant idea that all this activity is perhaps occurring simultaneously. Hence the irony/tragedy that dire events (via montage) are cancelled out or at least "laughed at" by the more mundane, the banal, the quotidian which is given equal visual status throughout and is, in fact, used to set off the spectacular. Elements of a dance of death, of retribution for lightheartedness (a viewer's chuckle is invariably answered by a more upsetting image) and a diabolical skirting-of-the-surface is evident throughout. There is so much activity, combustion, pace that in a cumulative toll begins to seem futile. There is also alot for the viewer to decide, to choose and to consider. Connections between images may be a geometric shape, a color, a trajectory, a directional pull, a visual pun or a slap in the face contradiction. Whatever the energies, all is not perfect; that is not an ideal world out there (though this also does not dissipate the fitful glimpses of paradise or contentment). These latter occur usually when the singular takes on the crowd, when the individual is set in opposition to the mass: The benign, the positive, the approving is then the stance - and indeed has the last word by being the last image in that metaphor for the contemplative artist. But this does not vitiate against so much mindless aggression that has dominated the visual palette for so much of the film. For me that's what montage can do best - to juggle disparate reactions in a struggle against viewer complacency and easily derived judgments.

Well, I could go on but I hope at least this is an okay beginning, helpful for whatever commentary you eventually propose. Again as I mentioned on the phone I really do welcome a variety of readings of my work; that's basically what they're about. And I also do feel that the work should be seen whole but that remains to be discussed. If the print isn't there by Monday let me know. Best,

Warren